

**Caterpillar Inc.**

Peoria, Illinois 61629

November 19, 2003

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Bill Thomas, M.C.  
Washington, DC

Dear Representative:

I'm writing to urge you to vote for the conference report on the Medicare Reform and Prescription Drug Act. This historic conference agreement updates Medicare by making substantial reforms to the program, expands private plan choices for beneficiaries and retirees, improves health care quality, and provides a critically important prescription drug benefit to all senior citizens. It also recognizes the important role of employers in offering retirees health care benefits. Employers currently provide prescription drug benefits to one in every three retirees with prescription drug coverage.


We also applaud the conferees for including provisions in the conference report that modify the "Hatch-Waxman" law. This law, while intended to create greater competition and lower priced prescription drugs, needs to be reformed to ensure faster approval of generic products. Caterpillar strongly supports these improvements so Americans can have access to generic versions of products that are off-patent. We expect this provision will help slow the rapid increase in prescription drug costs.

Caterpillar is a self-insured company that offers quality health care coverage to more than 125,000 employees, retirees, and their dependents. We work hard to manage our health care costs in order to help ensure the availability of those benefits to current and future employees and retirees. We design benefit programs to address the changing needs of those we cover and in response to a changing health care system. This compromise will help employers like Caterpillar continue providing quality coverage to retirees.

Congressional conferees have developed an historic bipartisan conference agreement that will improve the quality of health care for millions of senior citizens. It provides long-delayed and much-needed reforms while improving seniors' access to modern medicines and a reformed and improved health care program. It should be passed by both chambers as soon as possible and sent to the President for his signature.

We hope you will support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Glen Barton  
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